

FRANJO ŠEPER: AN EXCEPTIONAL PERSONALITY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CROATIA AND THE WORLD. ON THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS DEATH*

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On the thirtieth anniversary of Cardinal Franjo Šeper's death, this work presents some better and lesser-known facts and events from his life. Besides these facts, there is an analysis of Šeper's role, both in the Catholic Church in Croatia and in the world. Certain aspects which have not thus far been sufficiently taken into consideration concerning Šeper's activities are examined.

Key words: Franjo Šeper, Catholic Church, Zagreb archbishop, cardinal, Vatican, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

Introduction

The activity of the Catholic Church in Croatia is a virtually inexhaustible historiographic source. This is why the activity of the Church as an institution and that of distinguished clerical officials who exerted a greater or lesser influence on its work are both vital to historiography. In this regard, Franjo Šeper was certainly one of the Church's most distinguished personalities. He began as a catechism instructor, and then became archdiocesan secretary, coadjutor

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bishop, Zagreb archbishop and finally cardinal.¹ Among the many institutions of the Catholic Church, he was also the prefect of one of the most significant, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. He was made prefect of this Congregation in 1968,² thus becoming the *de facto* right-hand of the bishop of Rome, the pope, and thus also one of the most important individuals in the contemporary Church. His importance was exceptional to the Church as a whole, but even more so to its branch in Croatia. Šeper was the most highly-placed Croat in the Catholic Church ever. However, this post was not assigned to him by chance. For Šeper proved himself in many fields of the Church's activities, and from the very beginning he attracted the attention of both the Church and the public at large. All of these are factors which highlight his great significance when considering the activity of the contemporary Church.

Šeper's Youth and Schooling

Franjo Šeper was born in Osijek on 2 October 1905³ in the working-class family of Vjekoslav and Marija, who could trace their descent from the Austrian province of Burgenland. Šeper had sister named Ivka, who was born in Osijek, and brother named Mirko, who was born in Zagreb, to which the family moved for existential reasons in 1910.⁴ Upon his arrival in Zagreb, Šeper's family moved to the former Gregorijančeva street, today Nikole Grškovića street.

¹ The cardinal was a member of the College of Cardinals, which elects and advises the pope. The curial cardinals sit in Rome and participate in various consistories, while the residential cardinals administer their (arch)dioceses. As members of the College of Cardinals, the cardinals participate in the conclave to elect the new pope, insofar as they meet the age requirements, i.e., if they are not over 80 years of age (source: *Opći religijski leksikon* (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2002), p. 425, see: http://www.vatican.va/news_services/-press/documentazione/documents/cardinali_index_en.html).

² The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith studies controversial questions and evaluates theological thought. After the reform of the Roman Curia in 1967, its name was changed from the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office (See: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/index.htm).

³ Miroslav Akmadža, *Franjo Šeper – mudročću protiv jednogmlja* (Zagreb/Rijeka: Tkalčić/Otokar Keršovani, 2009), p. 21, V. Čapek, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper kao student, nadbiskupski tajnik i rektor Bogoslovnog sjemeništa", *Veritatem facientes in caritate: zbornik radova Međunarodnoga simpozija o kardinalu Franji Šeperu povodom 20. obljetnice smrti* (Zagreb: Glas koncila/Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2003), p. 219, Juraj Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", *Zagrebački biskupi i nadbiskupi* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1995), p. 503, Vladimir Stanković, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper – biografski profil", *Veritatem facientes in caritate: zbornik radova Međunarodnoga simpozija o kardinalu Franji Šeperu povodom 20. obljetnice smrti* (Zagreb: Glas koncila/Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2003), p. 340.

⁴ M. Akmadža, *Franjo Šeper – mudročću protiv jednogmlja*, p. 21, V. Čapek, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper kao student, nadbiskupski tajnik i rektor Bogoslovnog sjemeništa", p. 219, J. Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", pp. 503-504, V. Stanković, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper – biografski profil", p. 340.

Šeper attended lower primary school in Kaptol (Zagreb's cathedral district) and then the Lower Town Gymnasium, from which he graduated in 1924.⁵ From the very beginning he was very active in Catholic associations, such as, for example, the youth movement Catholic Action and the Marian Congregation led by the Jesuit fathers in Zagreb's Palmotićeve street. He decided to join the priesthood, and on this basis the Zagreb archbishop of the time, Antun Bauer⁶ sent him to study at the papal Collegium Germanicum et Hungaricum in Rome in November 1924. During his period of study in Rome, Franjo Šeper earned a doctorate in philosophy from the Pontifical Gregorian University in 1927⁷ and then in theology in 1931.⁸ Also during his stay in Rome, he was ordained to the priesthood together with Alojzije Stepinac⁹, on the Feast of Christ the King on 26 October 1930.¹⁰ He served his first mass on the Feast of All Saints in the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls.

Šeper's Activities as a Priest

Šeper returned to Zagreb in July 1931 and in September of that same year he assumed the post of religious instructor at the First Women's Real

⁵ M. Akmadža, *Franjo Šeper – mudrošću protiv jednonumlja*, p. 21, V. Čapek, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper kao student, nadbiskupski tajnik i rektor Bogoslovnog sjemeništa", p. 219, J. Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", p. 504, Stjepan Razum, "Franjo Šeper: prilozi za životopis ili izabrane isprave o duhovnosti, službama i častima", *Tkalčić* 5 (2001) no. 1: 334-335, V. Stanković, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper – biografski profil", p. 340.

⁶ Antun Bauer was born in Breznica on 11 February 1856. He was ordained in July 1879. He was appointed coadjutor archbishop of the Zagreb Archdiocese and titular archbishop of Pessinus in Turkish Anatolia on 20 January 1911. He was elevated to Zagreb archbishop on 26 April 1914. He died in Zagreb on 9 December 1937 (Source: <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bbaua.html>).

⁷ M. Akmadža, *Franjo Šeper – mudrošću protiv jednonumlja*, p. 21, J. Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", p. 504, V. Stanković, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper – biografski profil", p. 340.

⁸ M. Akmadža, *Franjo Šeper – mudrošću protiv jednonumlja*, p. 21, J. Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", p. 504, S. Razum, "Franjo Šeper: prilozi za životopis ili izabrane isprave o duhovnosti, službama i častima", pp. 341-345, V. Stanković, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper – biografski profil", p. 340.

⁹ Alojzije Stepinac was born in Brezarić, next to Krašić, on 8 May 1898. He was ordained in Rome on 26 October 1930, together with Franjo Šeper. On 28 May 1934, Pope Pius XII appointed him archbishop coadjutor of the Zagreb Archdiocese, and he was conferred the honorary titular diocese of Nicopsis in the present-day Georgian district of Abkhazia. On 7 December he assumed the post of Zagreb archbishop, and on 12 January 1953, Pope Pius XII elevated him to cardinal. He was persecuted and sentenced by the communist authorities in Yugoslavia. He died in confinement in Krašić on 10 February 1960. Pope John Paul II beatified him on 3 October 1998 (source: <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bstepinac.html>).

¹⁰ M. Akmadža, *Franjo Šeper – mudrošću protiv jednonumlja*, p. 21, J. Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", p. 504, S. Razum, "Franjo Šeper: prilozi za životopis ili izabrane isprave o duhovnosti, službama i častima", p. 341, V. Stanković, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper – biografski profil", p. 340.

Gymnasium.¹¹ After proving himself as a highly qualified and conscientious catechism instructor, he was appointed archdiocesan secretary in 1935.¹² Šeper held this rather vital post during Bauer's, and then Stepinac's ministry as archbishop. His service in this post was exceptionally notable, particularly in that he received and rescued many Jews who fled to Croatia before the looming threat of Nazism. Archbishop Stepinac then appointed him chancellor of the Archdiocesan Theological Seminary in Zagreb.¹³ Šeper performed his duties at this post during the very arduous wartime and post-war period. As wartime events drew to a close, he had to step down from this post at the express insistence of the communist authorities. Many seminarians and theologians were then imprisoned after enduring show trials. The Zagreb auxiliary bishop and interim administrator of the archdiocese, Franjo Salis-Seewis, sent Šeper to serve as administrator of the Parish of Christ the King in Zagreb's Trnje precinct in 1951.¹⁴ Under these exceptionally difficult circumstances, Šeper distinguished himself with his work and particularly in the religious instruction of youths in the Zagreb parishes of St. Mary and St. Joseph in the Trešnjevka precinct. However, the experience he had acquired during his administration of the parish in Trnje was particularly valuable to him. During this time he also spent several weeks in prison.

Šeper as Bishop

Based on his noted and selfless work to the benefit of the Catholic Church in extremely difficult times, Pope Pius XII appointed Šeper *sedi datus*,¹⁵ coadjutor

¹¹ M. Akmadža, *Franjo Šeper – mudročću protiv jednoumlja*, p. 21, J. Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", p. 504.

¹² M. Akmadža, *Franjo Šeper – mudročću protiv jednoumlja*, p. 21, V. Čapek, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper kao student, nadbiskupski tajnik i rektor Bogoslovnog sjemeništa", pp. 223-227, J. Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", p. 504, V. Stanković, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper – biografski profil", p. 340.

¹³ M. Akmadža, *Franjo Šeper – mudročću protiv jednoumlja*, pp. 22-33, V. Čapek, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper kao student, nadbiskupski tajnik i rektor Bogoslovnog sjemeništa", pp. 227-231, J. Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", p. 504, V. Stanković, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper – biografski profil", p. 340.

¹⁴ M. Akmadža, *Franjo Šeper – mudročću protiv jednoumlja*, pp. 33-34, V. Čapek, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper kao student, nadbiskupski tajnik i rektor Bogoslovnog sjemeništa", p. 230, J. Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", p. 504, S. Razum, "Franjo Šeper: prilozi za životopis ili izabrane isprave o duhovnosti, službama i častima", p. 356, V. Stanković, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper – biografski profil", p. 340, Alojzije Žlebečić, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper kao župnik Krista Kralja u Zagrebu", *Veritatem facientes in caritate: zbornik radova Međunarodnoga simpozija o kardinalu Franji Šeperupovodom 20. obljetnice smrti* (Zagreb: Glas koncila/Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2003), pp. 240-245.

¹⁵ Assumption of administration of the (arch)diocese prior to official appointment to this post (See: http://www.vatican.va/latin/latin_codex.html).

archbishop of the Zagreb Archdiocese, on 22 July 1954,¹⁶ as well as titular archbishop of Philippopolis in Thrace (Bulgaria).¹⁷ Besides this appointment, the pope also granted him the authority of residential bishop during the time that Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac was in confinement in his native village of Krašić.¹⁸ In this manner, the pope placed Šeper at Cardinal Stepinac's disposal as his personal proxy, with all of the authority, rights and obligations that this ministry entailed. On 5 August 1954, Msgr. Domenico Tardini,¹⁹ the Holy See's secretary of state, set a letter notifying the Zagreb auxiliary bishop and general vicar of the Zagreb Cathedral Chapter, Msgr. Franjo Salis-Seewis,²⁰ of the pope's decision and Šeper's appointment as coadjutor archbishop. At the time, Salis-Seewis was at the time performing *sede impedita*,²¹ temporary administration of the Zagreb Archdiocese as apostolic administrator. On that same day, Vatican Secretary of State Tardini sent a similar notification on Šeper's appointment to Belgrade Archbishop Msgr. Josip Ujčić.²² Ujčić then forwarded this letter to Šeper himself on 10 August 1954.²³ The letters were then formally released and presented at the session of the Zagreb Cathedral Chapter on 20 September 1954.²⁴

¹⁶ Nadbiskupski arhiv Zagreb (Zagreb Archdiocese Archives, hereinafter: NAZ), fond Ostavštine stožernika Franje Šepera (Cardinal Franjo Šeper Papers, hereinafter: OFŠ), *Povelja N36* (Charter N36), folder no. 9, J. Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", p. 505, S. Razum, "Franjo Šeper: prilozi za životopis ili izabrane isprave o duhovnosti, službama i častima", pp. 359-361, *Šeper. Građa za životopis*, vol. I. (Zagreb: Nadbiskupski duhovni stol, 1982), pp. 131-132.

¹⁷ NAZ, OFŠ, *Ibid.*, Cf. J. Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", p. 505, S. Razum, "Franjo Šeper: prilozi za životopis ili izabrane isprave o duhovnosti, službama i častima", pp. 359-360, *Šeper. Građa za životopis*, vol. I, pp. 131-132.

¹⁸ J. Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", p. 505.

¹⁹ Domenico Tardini was born in Rome on 29 February 1888. He was ordained in Rome on 20 September 1912. On 16 December 1937 he was appointed secretary of the Roman Curia - Other. He was appointed Holy See Secretary of State by Pope Pius XII on 14 December 1958 and on the next day he was elevated to the rank of cardinal and given authority over the Church of S. Apollinare alle Terme Neroniane-Alessandrine in Lazio. He died on 30 July 1961 (Source: <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/btardini.html>).

²⁰ Franjo Salis-Seewis was born in Karlovac on 15 January 1872. He was ordained on 1 August 1897. He earned a doctorate in philosophy at the Gregorian University in Rome and a doctorate in theology in Innsbruck. Pope Pius XI appointed him Zagreb auxiliary bishop on 23 April 1926. When Archbishop Stepinac was placed on confinement in 1946, Bishop Salis Seewis assumed interim administration of the Zagreb Archdiocese as general vicar. He died in Zagreb on 27 October 1967 (source: <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bsali.html>).

²¹ This term indicates the vacancy of a bishop's or archbishop's see for a given reason (see: http://www.vatican.va/latin/latin_codex.html).

²² NAZ, OFŠ, *Osobne isprave* (Personal Documents), N5137/54, J. Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", p. 505, S. Razum, "Franjo Šeper: prilozi za životopis ili izabrane isprave o duhovnosti, službama i častima", pp. 362-363.

²³ NAZ, OFŠ, *Osobne isprave*, *Ibid.*, J. Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", p. 505, S. Razum, "Franjo Šeper: prilozi za životopis ili izabrane isprave o duhovnosti, službama i častima", pp. 363-364.

²⁴ NAZ, OFŠ, *Osobne isprave*, Minutes to the session of the Zagreb Cathedral Chapter, 20

Šeper's episcopal consecration in the cathedral in Zagreb on 21 September 1954²⁵ was officiated by Belgrade Archbishop Josip Ujčić²⁶, who also headed the Yugoslav Conference of Bishops,²⁷ and Zagreb Auxiliary Bishop Msgr. Franjo Salis-Seewis and Msgr. Josip Lach.²⁸ Šeper chose as his episcopal motto the words of St. Paul, *Veritatem in facientes caritate*, or "Proclaiming the truth in love".²⁹

The state authorities carefully followed unfolding events in the Zagreb Archdiocese, particularly its agencies which dealt with the activities of the Catholic Church. These agencies included the State Security Service of both the national, Yugoslav, and republic, Croatian, internal affairs secretariats, the Ideology and Policy Commission and the Politburo of the Yugoslav Party's Central Committee, as well as the equivalent bodies in the Croatian party, and above all the Federal Commission on Relations with Religious Communities, which operated under the Federal Executive Council (essentially the Yugoslav government) and its branch operating under the equivalent executive council of socialist Croatia. These agencies maintained detailed and very lengthy records of their observations and interpretations of internal Church events. Thus, among other things, a report was compiled under the title "Data on the new Archbishop Coadjutor Šeper, Dr. Franjo", dated 21 September 1954, on his appointment as one of Cardinal Stepinac's assistants.³⁰ In this document, Šeper is very tendentiously depicted as a pro-Ustasha sympathizer prior to the Second World War, who during the war approved of so-called enemy activity by seminarians at the Zagreb seminary. He also had an apparently adversarial

September 1954, J. Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", p. 505, S. Razum, "Franjo Šeper: prilozi za životopis ili izabrane isprave o duhovnosti, službama i častima", pp. 364-365.

²⁵ M. Akmadža, *Franjo Šeper – mudročću protiv jednogumlja*, p. 35, V. Stanković, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper – biografski profil", p. 342.

²⁶ Msgr. Josip Ujčić was born in Stari Pazin on 10 February 1880. He was ordained on 27 July 1902. On 28 November 1936 he was appointed archbishop of the Belgrade Archdiocese, and received bishop's orders on 7 March 1937. After the arrest of Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac he assumed the presidency of the Yugoslav Conference of Bishop. He died in Belgrade on 25 March 1964 (source: <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bujcic.html>).

²⁷ The Conference of Bishops is a permanent institution of the Catholic episcopate of a given nation, state or specific territory, whose members are brought together by common pastoral tasks. This principle also underlay the activity of the Yugoslav Conference of Bishops, from which the Croatian Conference of Bishops would later develop. Source: *Opći religijski leksikon*, p. 104; see: http://www.vatican.va/latin/latin_codex.html.

²⁸ Msgr. Josip Lach was born in Varaždin on 16 March 1899. He was ordained on 18 September 1921. Pope Pius XII appointed him Zagreb auxiliary bishop on 11 December 1939, and his service commenced on 7 April 1940. He remained at this post until his death on 12 September 1983 (Source: <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/blach.html>).

²⁹ M. Akmadža, *Franjo Šeper – mudročću protiv jednogumlja*, p. 35.

³⁰ Croatian State Archives (HDA), Republic Internal Affairs Secretariat (RSUP), State Security Service (SDS), *Dosje Šeper* [Šeper file], no. 302513, 93/1561, M. Akmadža, *Franjo Šeper – mudročću protiv jednogumlja*, pp. 36-37.

attitude toward the Partisan movement, and he instructed seminarians in this spirit and that he continued such activity even after the war. The report also characterized Šeper as a blind adherent of the Holy See and a confidant of Cardinal Stepinac. However, it also contained the view that Šeper had softened, i.e., that he was less rigid in his standpoints than Stepinac. These assertions were accompanied by the detail that Šeper had been received in a meeting with Vladimir Bakarić,³¹ at that time the prime minister of the People's Republic of Croatia. During this meeting, held on 7 December 1954, Bakarić asked Šeper: "Are we going to live in peace or are we going to argue?" Šeper responded: "I prefer that we live in peace". Bakarić then stated that the state authorities preferred peace as well, but that he did not see any readiness for this in the Church's ranks, so that Šeper suggested that "each should deal with his own affairs in his own field".³²

During his *ad limina apostolorum*³³ stay in Rome in the spring of 1958,³⁴ Šeper was appointed *nunc pro tunc*³⁵ apostolic administrator of the Zagreb Archdiocese by Pope John XXIII. This decision was then confirmed by the Holy See Congregation of the Consistory in Rome on 24 March 1958. By this decree, Šeper became the apostolic administrator of the Zagreb Archdiocese "with all rights, authority and duties."³⁶ This act also avoided the possibility of *sede vacante*,³⁷ which may have emerged upon the death of Cardinal Stepinac. Under such an outcome, the Zagreb Cathedral Chapter would have been compelled to select a capitular vicar for the Zagreb Archdiocese because Šeper had until then been the coadjutor archbishop. Upon the death of

³¹ Vladimir Bakarić was born in Velika Gorica on 8 March 1912. He was a doctor of laws and a communist leader in the former socialist Yugoslavia. He worked as an attorney until 1941. He was a member of the Yugoslav Communist Party since 1933. From 1948 to 1969 he was the chairman of the Croatian League of Communists, holding many high political posts. He died in Zagreb on 16 January 1983.

³² NAZ, OFŠ, *Osobne isprave*, folder no. 5, Cf. M. Akmadža, *Franjo Šeper – mudročću protiv jednoumlja*, pp. 37-38, Juraj Kolarić, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper kao nadbiskup koadjutor i nadbiskup zagrebački", *Veritatem facientes in caritate: zbornik radova Međunarodnoga simpozija o kardinalu Franji Šeperu povodom 20. obljetnice smrti* (Zagreb: Glas koncila/Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2003), pp. 118-120.

³³ A literal translation of this phrase is "to the threshold of the Apostles". This visit is a unique opportunity for bishops throughout the world to personally meet the pope and discuss the circumstances and problems in their diocese (see: http://www.vatican.va/latin/latin_codex.html).

³⁴ M. Akmadža, *Franjo Šeper – mudročću protiv jednoumlja*, p. 54.

³⁵ This means "now for then", an appointment to a duty with the objective of subsequent assumption of greater authority (see: http://www.vatican.va/latin/latin_codex.html).

³⁶ NAZ, OFŠ, *Osobne isprave*, 321/1958, Cf. M. Akmadža, *Franjo Šeper – mudročću protiv jednoumlja*, p. 85, S. Razum, "Franjo Šeper: prilozi za životopis ili izabrane isprave o duhovnosti, službama i častima", pp. 369-370, J. Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", p. 505, *Službeni vjesnik Nadbiskupije Zagrebačke*, no. 1/1960, pp. 3-4.

³⁷ A term which in the Catholic Church designates a vacancy in a given diocesan or archdiocesan see for any reason (see: http://www.vatican.va/latin/latin_codex.html).

Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac in Krašić on 10 February 1960,³⁸ Šeper immediately assumed Stepinac's authority based on this decision by the Holy See.³⁹ Thus, on 12 February 1960, Šeper presented to the Zagreb canons the decision of the Congregation of the Consistory authorizing him to assume administration of the vacant archbishop's see.⁴⁰ Already on 5 March 1960, only twenty-four days after Cardinal Stepinac's death, Pope John XXIII appointed Šeper the residential Zagreb archbishop and metropolitan of the Zagreb clerical province. With this appointment, Šeper was entrusted with administration of the archdiocese in both the spiritual and secular sense. This appointment also incorporated all duties and rights which ensue from the ministry of residential archbishop. He was then asked to swear his loyalty to the pope and the Catholic Church, which he was obliged to submit to the Congregation of the Consistory.⁴¹ Šeper was also divested of the post of titular bishop of Philippopolis, in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, of which he notified the Vatican Secretary of State, Msgr. Domenico Tardini, on 7 April 1960.⁴² Šeper was additionally notified that the pope had authorized him to take possession of the Zagreb see and that this decision could be presented to the Zagreb Cathedral Chapter. At the session of the Zagreb Cathedral Chapter held on 16 April 1960, Šeper presented this letter from the Vatican's secretary of state, whereby he took possession of the Zagreb archbishop's see. Šeper then sent a written reply to this letter to Rome four days later.⁴³ In it, Šeper reminded Msgr. Tardini that he had asked the preceding pope, Pius XII, to bypass him for this ministry, but that he had nonetheless opted to accede to the pope's request. In this regard, on 25 April 1960, Šeper sent a written note of gratitude to Pope John XXIII, in which he expressed his awareness of his new duties and his own failings, but that he accepted the new ministry in the spirit of humility before the Church's supreme official. He took this opportunity to inform the pope that on 16 April 1960 he had officially taken possession of the Zagreb archbishop's see.⁴⁴ Šeper also sent his pledge of loyalty to the Congregation of the Consistory on 1 June 1960.⁴⁵ Šeper took the completed

³⁸ V. Stanković, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper – biografski profil", p. 342.

³⁹ J. Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", p. 505.

⁴⁰ NAZ, OFŠ, *Osobne isprave*, no. 57/Pr. 1960, S. Razum, "Franjo Šeper: prilozi za životopis ili izabrane isprave o duhovnosti, službama i častima", pp. 370-371.

⁴¹ NAZ, OFŠ, *Povelja*, folder no. 9, S. Razum, "Franjo Šeper: prilozi za životopis ili izabrane isprave o duhovnosti, službama i častima", pp. 371-372.

⁴² NAZ, OFŠ, *Povelja*, N.3327/60, S. Razum, "Franjo Šeper: prilozi za životopis ili izabrane isprave o duhovnosti, službama i častima", pp. 372-374, *Službeni vjesnik Nadbiskupije Zagrebačke*, no. 3/1960, p. 1 and no. 4/1960, pp. 41-45.

⁴³ NAZ, OFŠ, *Osobne isprave*, N. 55/Pr./1960, S. Razum, "Franjo Šeper: prilozi za životopis ili izabrane isprave o duhovnosti, službama i častima", pp. 374-375.

⁴⁴ NAZ, OFŠ, *Osobne isprave*, N. 61/Pr., S. Razum, "Franjo Šeper: prilozi za životopis ili izabrane isprave o duhovnosti, službama i častima", pp. 376-377.

⁴⁵ NAZ, OFŠ, *Osobne isprave*, N?/Pr., S. Razum, "Franjo Šeper: prilozi za životopis ili izabrane isprave o duhovnosti, službama i častima", pp. 377-378.

form for his oath before Senj-Modruš bishop, Msgr. Viktor Burić. The next year, on 17 January 1961, Cardinal Nicola Canali,⁴⁶ acting as the pope's envoy, presented to Šeper's representative Msgr. Đuro Kokša⁴⁷ the archbishop's staff⁴⁸ in Rome. This event was recorded by the protonotary apostolic Enrico Dante.⁴⁹ This promotion was followed the appointment of Franjo Šeper to the post of president of the Yugoslav Conference of Bishops by the Holy See Secretariat of State on 28 May 1961.⁵⁰ Šeper thus succeeded the preceding president, the bishop of Belgrade Msgr. Josip Ujčić.

Šeper's Work at Head of the Zagreb Archdiocese

Šeper's activity as Zagreb archbishop proceeded at a time of significant change in the Catholic Church as a whole. This was the era when, after the

⁴⁶ Nicola Canali was born in Rietu, Italy on 6 June 1874. He was ordained on 31 March 1900. On 21 March he became an official of the Holy See's Secretariat, while on 24 September 1914 he became secretary of the Congregation for Rites and on 27 June 1926 he became an official of the Congregation of the Holy See. Pope Pius XI elevated him to cardinal on 16 December 1935 and entrusted the Roman Basilica of St. Nicholas to him. On 20 March 1939 he became chairman of the Vatican's Pontifical Commission. Pope Pius XII appointed him major penitentiary, i.e. confessor of the Apostolic Penitentiary, on 15 October 1941 (source: <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bcanali.html>).

⁴⁷ Đuro Kokša was born in Molve on 17 May 1922. He was ordained on 26 October 1947. Pope Paul VI appointed him auxiliary archbishop of Zagreb on 20 April 1978, and made him titular bishop of Grumentum in the southern Italian province of Basilicata. He received the bishop's orders on 23 July 1978. He died in Zagreb on 26 November 1998. He earned a doctorate in theology and master's degrees in philosophy, clerical law and Church history. Over a long period, from 1959 to 1979, he was the chancellor of the Pontifical Croatian Institute of St. Jerome in Rome. He played a crucial role in changing the name from the "Illyrian Institute of St. Jerome" to the "Pontifical Croatian Institute of St. Jerome" in 1971. He was the primary regent of Zagreb Archbishop Cardinal Franjo Kuharić since 1980, and from 1985 onward he was his advisor. He was made canon in 1984, and in 1985 he was appointed chair of the Council on Ecumenism and Dialogue of the Zagreb Archdiocese, while in 1987 he became the grand prefect of the Zagreb Cathedral Chapter (source: <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bkoksa.html>).

⁴⁸ NAZ, OFŠ, *Osobne isprave*, folder no. 5, S. Razum, "Franjo Šeper: prilozi za životopis ili izabrane isprave o duhovnosti, službama i častima", pp. 378-379.

⁴⁹ Enrico Dante was born in Rome on 5 July 1884. He was ordained on 3 July 1910. He worked in the Roman diocese up to 5 January 1960, when he was appointed titular bishop of Carpasia on Cyprus, and he received the bishop's orders on 21 September of that same year. Pope Paul VI appointed him to the College of Cardinals and entrusted the Roman Basilica of St. Agatha to him. He died on 24 April 1967 (source: <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bdante.html>).

⁵⁰ NAZ, Tajnički ured nadbiskupa Franje Šepera (Secretarial office of Archbishop Franjo Šeper, hereinafter: TUFŠ), N5450/61, Hrvatski državni arhiv (HDA), Komisija za odnose sa vjerskim zajednicama Izvršnog vijeća Sabora SR Hrvatske (KOVZ), kutija br. 44, Pov. 158/1961, (Croatian National Archive, Commission for relations with religious communities of Executive council of the Parliament of Socialist Republic of Croatia), M. Akmadža, *Franjo Šeper – mudročću protiv jednoumlja*, p. 104, J. Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", p. 505, S. Razum, "Franjo Šeper: prilozi za životopis ili izabrane isprave o duhovnosti, službama i častima", pp. 371-377, *Službeni vjesnik Nadbiskupije Zagrebačke*, no. 3/1961, p. 23.

Second Vatican Council,⁵¹ the Church became more open to the contemporary world and ceased being simply an observer of world events. At the global level, Pope John XXIII⁵² played a major role in the Catholic Church, as he initiated the *aggiornamento*,⁵³ i.e., the modernization of the Catholic Church. His endeavours were continued after his death by his successor, Pope Paul VI.⁵⁴ Franjo Šeper himself played a significant role in these changes within

⁵¹ The Second Vatican Council, or the twenty-first Ecumenical Council, was held in the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome from 1962 to 1965. Pope John XXIII announced it on 25 January 1959 and formally convened it by apostolic decision on 25 December 1961. After the death of Pope John XXIII, the Council was continued and concluded by Pope Paul VI. The purpose of the Council was to renew the Catholic Church in the face of the modern world (*aggiornamento*). The Council proceeded in four sessions. It was attended by 2,500 clerical dignitaries from the entire world, while other Christian communities were also invited as observers. Condemnation and excommunication were replaced by a stance of understanding, testimony and ecumenism and dialogue. The *Index* of prohibited books was abolished, the mutual excommunication between the Eastern and Western Churches was withdrawn, and living languages were introduced to the liturgy. The Council's were set forth in sixteen Council documents (four constitutions, nine decrees and three declarations) in Latin (source: *Opći religijski leksikon*, pp. 207-208, see also: http://www.vatican.va/latin/latin_council.html).

⁵² John XXIII, born Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, was pope from 1958 to 1963. He was born in Sotte il Monte, near Bergamo (in Lombardy, Italy), on 25 November 1881. He was ordained on 10 August 1904. On 3 March 1925, Pope Pius XI appointed him to the diplomatic service in Bulgaria and appointed him titular bishop of Areopolis on the Peloponnese in Greece, for which he received the bishop's orders on 19 March 1925. Already on 16 October 1931, he assumed the post of apostolic delegate to Bulgaria. On 30 November 1934 he received the honorary title of bishop of Mesembria, on the Black Sea coast of Bulgaria. On 12 January 1935 was appointed apostolic delegate in Turkey and Bulgaria, and then Pope Pius XII appointed him apostolic nuncio to France. The same pope appointed him to the College of Cardinals on 12 January 1953 and entrusted him with the Roman Basilica of S. Prisca. Already three days later, the pope appointed him patriarch of Venice, a post he held until he became pope on 28 October 1958. After this conclave, he assumed the name John XXIII. During his brief pontificate he advocated reformist and ecumenical ideas and he initiated the modernization (*aggiornamento*) of the Church. He initiated and convened the Second Vatican Council and his posited his ideas in eight encyclicals. He died on 3 June 1963 (source: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/, <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bis-hop/roncalli.html>, http://www.gcatholic.com/hier_archy/pope/123.htm).

⁵³ Translated from Italian, this means modernization. In the Catholic Church, this meant modernization and adaptation of its activity to a new era. The term was used particularly with reference to the reform efforts of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and the ideas of Pope John XXIII (source: *Opći religijski leksikon*, p. 13).

⁵⁴ Pope Paul VI, born Giovanni Battista Montini in Concesio, near Brescia in Italy's Lombardy region on 26 September 1897. He was ordained on 29 May 1920. Pope Pius XII appointed him archbishop of Milan on 1 November 1954, and he formally assumed this post on 12 December of that same year. The same pope appointed him to the College of Cardinals, and entrusted him with the Basilica of S Silvestro e Martino ai Monti. He served as Milan archbishop until the conclave of 12 June 1963 at which the new pope was elected. He assumed the pontificate on 30 June of that same year and held it until his death on 6 August 1978. Upon becoming pope, he followed John XXIII's reformist ideas and continued the Second Vatican Council. He encouraged ecumenism and dialogue with non-Christian religious communities. He also advocated lasting and just world peace, and expanded the College of Cardinals to include cardinals from all parts

the Church. He was one of the more distinguished personalities at the Council's sessions, and there is no doubt that he was the principal initiator and promoter of acceptance of the Council's decisions in the Catholic Church in Croatian territory. His efforts in this regard were particularly reflected in the systematic advocacy of active participation by lay believers in the life of the Catholic Church, in the encouragement of interreligious dialogue, and the reinforcement of the Church's public role by means of charitable and media campaigns and numerous other aspects of life.

Franjo Šeper became the head of the largest archdiocese in the country and the chief of the Yugoslav Conference of Bishops at a time of great change in the world and in the Catholic Church itself, but also in socialist Yugoslavia. After the death of Zagreb Archbishop Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac, it had appeared that an era in the life of the Catholic Church under communism had come to a close, and his successor was awaited with some trepidation. The communist authorities were not pleased with the election of Šeper to head the archdiocese, even though they were uncertain as to whether the new archbishop would continue the uncompromising approach of his predecessor or begin a new style of cooperation with the regime. The need for change was keenly felt and anxiously anticipated in the Church as a whole. Communist Yugoslavia also wanted to bolster its foreign policy by securing better relations with the Catholic Church. According to the state authorities, Šeper belonged to that group of bishops with whom they could talk and negotiate, because he held moderate views. However, they still were not prepared for concrete cooperation with the state authorities. He was particularly faulted for his opposition to the Vocational Associations of Catholic Priests,⁵⁵ which were upheld by the state authorities until the mid-1960s as a way to weaken the Church. The authorities saw as positive the fact that Šeper, during the funeral services for Cardinal Stepinac, firmly responded to some of the congregation who began shouting "Hail Stepinac," by ordering them to stop. Šeper's bearing during his conversation with the chairman of the Croatian socialist government's Religious Affairs Commission, Stjepan Iveković, was assessed as very open; it was noted that he expressed his positions without hesitation. On this occasion, Šeper advocated the view that the Church and state had to compete in the field of ideology and that victory in this struggle should be conceded to the side that proved strongest. The representatives of the state authorities believed that Šeper was attempting to convey his opinions and positions through Bishop Msgr. Josip Lach.

of the world. He established the Synod of Bishops (1965) and abolished the *Index* of prohibited books (1966). He reorganized the Roman Curia (1967), introduced living national languages to the liturgy (1969) and reformed the celebration of Church holidays (1969) (source: http://www.vatican.va/latin/popese_latin/p-vi/latin_hf_pvi.html, <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bmontini.html>; <http://www.gcatholic.com/hierarchy/pope/PL6.htm>); *Službeni vjesnik Nadbiskupije Zagrebačke*, no. 5/1963, pp. 51-54.

⁵⁵ HDA, Association of Catholic Priests of the Socialist Republic of Croatia (DKS SRH), box NO. 1 and 2.

Upon assuming the post of residential archbishop of the Zagreb Archdiocese, Šeper gathered people in whom he had confidence and appointed them to key posts. Thus, for example, Bishop Msgr. Franjo Salis-Seewis became head of the Zagreb Cathedral Chapter, where he remained until his death on 27 October 1967.⁵⁶ He was then succeeded at this post by Bishop Msgr. Josip Lach, who also held the posts of president of the clerical court and general vicar of the Zagreb Archdiocese for the duration of Šeper's time as archbishop.⁵⁷ Beside Msgr. Lach, canon Stjepan Bakšić⁵⁸ was also a head of the Zagreb Cathedral Chapter till the year 1963⁵⁹. Mijo Pišonić was a personal secretary until his death in the car accident in 1962⁶⁰. PhD Dragutin Hren⁶¹ was a chancellor till 1967⁶².

The elevation to Zagreb archbishop did not go unnoticed in the daily press, either. However, incomparably greater attention was accorded to the death and burial of Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac and speculation as to how events would unfold after him. Thus, for example, the Zagreb edition of the Belgrade-based newspaper *Borba*, in an article bearing the headline "Dr. Franjo Šeper appointed administrator of the Zagreb Archdiocese", briefly noted that "by decision of the Vatican, Dr. Franjo Šeper, the coadjutor archbishop of the Zagreb Archdiocese, has been appointed administrator of this archdiocese". The article further contained a brief biography of Šeper's life and career up to that point, which were taken from Tanjug, the official Yugoslav news agency. At the very end of this news piece, there was this very concise observation: "Today in Zagreb, Dr. Alojzije Stepinac was buried in the customary religious rites."⁶³

⁵⁶ Stanislav Vitković, "(Ne)zaboravljeni hrvatski kardinal", *Marulić: hrvatska književna revija* 29 (1996), no. 1: 8.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁵⁸ Stjepan Bakšić rodio se 15. prosinca 1889. godine u Cvetkovićima kraj Jastrebarskog. Zaređen je za svećenika 6. srpnja 1913. godine. Doktorirao je filozofiju i teologiju. Vršio je dužnost prefekta Nadbiskupskoga sjemeništa u Zagrebu, glavnoga urednika *Katoličkoga lista* te profesora i predavača na Katoličkome bogoslovnom fakultetu u Zagrebu. Umro je 7. kolovoza 1963. godine.

⁵⁹ S. Vitković, "(Ne)zaboravljeni hrvatski kardinal", p. 8.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Dragutin Hren rodio se 19. ožujka 1895. godine u Zagrebu. Bio je istaknuti teolog, vjerski pisac i kustos. Također, bio je kanonik Prvostolonoga kaptola zagrebačkog. Djelovao je na Bogoslovnome sjemeništu te bio član prebendarskoga zbora Zagrebačke nadbiskupije. Umro je 7. travnja 1972. godine u Zagrebu.

⁶² S. Vitković, "(Ne)zaboravljeni hrvatski kardinal", p. 8.

⁶³ *Borba - zagrebačko izdanje*, 14 February 1960. This excerpt reads as follows: "Archbishop Dr. Franjo Šeper was born in Osijek in 1905. After completing the gymnasium in Zagreb he graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy and Theology in Rome at the Gregorian University. In 1930 he was ordained and earned his doctorate in theology. In 1931 he was appointed religious instructor at the Zagreb gymnasium, while in 1934 he became the archdiocesan secretary of the Zagreb Archdiocese. In 1941 he was appointed chancellor of the theological seminary in Zagreb. Until 1954 he was administrator of a Catholic parish in Zagreb, and after 1954 he served as coadjutor archbishop of the Zagreb Archdiocese".

Šeper left a very deep trace during his administration of the Zagreb Archdiocese. In his time in residence as archbishop, Šeper particularly advocated liturgical renewal, and as a result he was appointed chair of the Interdiocesan Liturgical Committee by the episcopate. Thus, among other things, in 1961 he introduced a regular Theology/Pastoralism course at the Catholic Theology Faculty in Zagreb for the purpose of regular education of the priesthood, which has been held annual from 1963 to the present.⁶⁴ He established the Zagreb Archdiocese Priesthood Council in 1966.⁶⁵ In that same year, he initiated the establishment of the Catechism Institute at the Catholic Theology Faculty, with the objective of educating both the clergy and the lay faithful.⁶⁶ He also established the Clerical Music Institute at that same Faculty on 16 September 1963 to enhance the liturgy.⁶⁷

During his administration of the Archdiocese, Šeper promoted the Catholic Church's publishing activities in particular. In this sense, he supported the work of the Croatian Literary Society of Sts. Cyril and Methodius (later of St. Jerome). He accorded great attention to the dissemination of information to Catholic believers. Because of this, he directly influenced the launching of the Catholic bi-weekly *Glas s koncila* ('Voice from the Council') at the end of 1962,⁶⁸ which would later become a weekly under the title *Glas koncila* ('Voice of the Council').⁶⁹ His intention was provide information in Croatia on the Vatican Council's sessions and the decisions made at them. However, with time this newspaper surpassed this framework and covered a very broad scope of the Catholic Church's activities in Croatia and Yugoslavia and beyond. Under the auspices of this same publisher, in 1966 a Catholic monthly was launched under the title *Mali koncil* ('Little Council'), which was intended for children and youths. Šeper also played a role in launching the Christian Modernity Centre for Conciliar Research, Documentation and Information in 1968.⁷⁰

⁶⁴ Adalbert Rebić, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper, pokretač "Svećeničkoga tjedna" kao sredstva stalne svećeničke izobrazbe", in: *Veritatem facientes in caritate: zbornik radova Međunarodnoga simpozija o kardinalu Franji Šeperu povodom 20. obljetnice smrti* (Zagreb: Glas koncila/Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2003) pp. 246-252.

⁶⁵ *Službeni vjesnik Nadbiskupije Zagrebačke*, 3/1968, pp. 44-46.

⁶⁶ Tomislav Zdenko Tenšek, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper i osnivanje znanstveno nastavnih instituta Katoličkoga bogoslovnog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu", in: *Veritatem facientes in caritate: zbornik radova Međunarodnoga simpozija o kardinalu Franji Šeperu povodom 20. obljetnice smrti* (Zagreb: Glas koncila/Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2003) pp. 271-282.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ivan Miklenić, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper – utemeljitelj katoličkoga lista Glasa koncila", in: *Veritatem facientes in caritate: zbornik radova Međunarodnoga simpozija o kardinalu Franji Šeperu povodom 20. obljetnice smrti* (Zagreb: Glas koncila/Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2003) pp. 253-261.

⁶⁹ NAZ, Nadbiskupski duhovni stol (NDS), no. 3733/1963, I. Miklenić, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper – utemeljitelj katoličkoga lista Glasa koncila", pp. 253-261, J. Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", p. 506.

⁷⁰ Stella Tamhina, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper ustanovitelj Centra za koncilski istraživanja, dokumentaciju i informacije – Kršćanska sadašnjost", in: *Veritatem facientes in caritate: zbornik*

At the time that he assumed the post of residential archbishop, Šeper was administering a large number of people in the Zagreb Archdiocese. Thus, in early 1960, at the beginning of Šeper's ministry as archbishop, there were 487 registered priests,⁷¹ 135 seminarians, and 110 theology students.⁷² On the other hand, in terms of church property, in early 1960 the Zagreb Archdiocese had 452 church buildings⁷³ and 389 parishes.⁷⁴ These parishes together formed 42 deaconates and 15 archdeaconates and the archdiocese entrusted to Šeper extended over a total of 22,795.5 square kilometres.⁷⁵

Following the example set by his predecessor Alojzije Stepinac, Šeper particularly expanded the Catholic Church's charitable work. In this regard, he saw to the opening of a branch of the organization "Caritas Internationalis".⁷⁶ Besides charity, Šeper also dedicated considerable effort to pastoral work, especially in the territory of Zagreb, which after the end of the Second World War had begun to rapidly expand, with the ensuing increase in its population. However, since this growing population necessitated an increase in the number of Catholic parishes and churches, Šeper decided to establish a special fund that would finance the construction of new churches. He therefore initiated the establishment of the "Pope John XIII Fund" on 23 May 1965.⁷⁷ During his administration of the Zagreb Archdiocese, Šeper established twenty-one new parishes,⁷⁸ of which eight were within Zagreb's city limits.⁷⁹

During his management of the Zagreb Archdiocese, Šeper particularly encouraged ecumenical dialogue with other religious communities. It was on these lines that he even met with the Serbian Orthodox Patriarch German in Srijemski Karlovci. Another major event that took place during Šeper's administration concerned dialogue with the state authorities, which resulted in some progress when the Protocols were signed between the representatives of the Yugoslav government and the Holy See in Belgrade in 1966.⁸⁰

radova Međunarodnoga simpozija o kardinalu Franji Šeperu povodom 20. obljetnice smrti (Zagreb: Glas koncila/Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2003), pp. 262-270.

⁷¹ *Opći šematizam Katoličke crkve u Jugoslaviji* (Zagreb: Biskupska konferencija Jugoslavije, 1975), p. 1069.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 1076.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 1078.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1082.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 505.

⁷⁷ M. Akmadža, *Franjo Šeper – mudročću protiv jednoumlja*, p. 250, J. Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", p. 505.

⁷⁸ J. Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", p. 505.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Arhiv Jugoslavije (AJ), AJ-377-OZF-144-10/726, Signing of the protocol between the Holy See and SFR of Yugoslavia between Msgr. Agostino Casaroli and Milutin Morača on 25th June 1966. *Službeni vjesnik Nadbiskupije Zagrebačke*, no. 6/1966, pp. 86-88, Agostino Casaroli,

Šeper left a notable mark on the sessions of the Second Vatican Council from 1962 to 1965.⁸¹ In the preparation of works for the Council in 1960, Šeper was appointed a member of the “de Sacramentis” conciliar commission,⁸² while in the following year he became a member of the Central Preparatory Commission⁸³ and the Commission on Sacraments and the Conciliar Theological Commission.⁸⁴ During the conciliar sessions, Šeper was an outspoken advocate of the use of vernacular languages in the liturgy, the permanent diaconate, communion under both rites, concelebration, religious liberty, the lay apostolate, the rights of migrants and other issues.⁸⁵ Šeper played an exceptional role in the adoption of the Apostolic Constitutions on the Church of the Second Vatican Council, such as the constitutions entitled *Lumen gentium*, *Dei Verbum* and *Gaudium et spes*.⁸⁶ Because of his notable addresses during the Council, Šeper was appointed chairman of the International Theological Commission and the Pontifical Biblical Commission.⁸⁷ As a result of this conciliar work, and also partially due to a recommendation⁸⁸ from the

Mučeništvo Strpljivosti (Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2001), pp. 299-370, Franjo Šanjek, “Kardinal Franjo Šeper i njegovo djelovanje u odnosima Crkve i države (Protokol Svete Stolice i SFRJ, 25. lipnja 1966.)”, in: *Veritatem facientes in caritate: zbornik radova Međunarodnoga simpozija o kardinalu Franji Šeperu povodom 20. obljetnice smrti* (Zagreb: Glas koncila – Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2003), pp. 262-270.

⁸¹ *Službeni vjesnik Nadbiskupije Zagrebačke*, no. 5/1965, pp. 75-77.

⁸² J. Kolarić, “Kardinal Franjo Šeper kao nadbiskup koadjutor i nadbiskup zagrebački”, p. 117.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁸⁴ V. Stanković, “Kardinal Franjo Šeper – biografski profil”, p. 344.

⁸⁵ J. Kolarić, “Franjo Šeper 1960-69”, p. 506.

⁸⁶ Vlado Košić, “Kardinal Franjo Šeper i Dogmatska konstitucija o Crkvi Drugoga vatikanskog sabora *Lumen Gentium*”, in: *Veritatem facientes in caritate: zbornik radova Međunarodnoga simpozija o kardinalu Franji Šeperu povodom 20. obljetnice smrti* (Zagreb: Glas koncila/Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2003), pp. 159-171, Željko Tanjić, “Doprinos zagrebačkoga nadbiskupa Franje Šepera izradbi Dogmatske konstitucije *Dei Verbum*”, in: *Veritatem facientes in caritate: zbornik radova Međunarodnoga simpozija o kardinalu Franji Šeperu povodom 20. obljetnice smrti* (Zagreb: Glas koncila/Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2003), pp. 172-195, Nikola Dogan, “Kardinal Franjo Šeper i *Gaudium et spes*”, in: *Veritatem facientes in caritate: zbornik radova Međunarodnoga simpozija o kardinalu Franji Šeperu povodom 20. obljetnice smrti* (Zagreb: Glas koncila/Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2003), pp. 196-218.

⁸⁷ Tarcisio Bertone, “Kardinal Franjo Šeper predsjednik Međunarodne teološke komisije (MTK) i Papinske biblijske komisije (PBK)”, in: *Veritatem facientes in caritate: zbornik radova Međunarodnoga simpozija o kardinalu Franji Šeperu povodom 20. obljetnice smrti* (Zagreb: Glas koncila/Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2003), pp. 70-103, Pierre Grelot, “Kardinal Franjo Šeper predsjednik Papinske biblijske komisije”, in: *Veritatem facientes in caritate: zbornik radova Međunarodnoga simpozija o kardinalu Franji Šeperu povodom 20. obljetnice smrti* (Zagreb: Glas koncila/Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2003), pp. 392-398, Karl Lehmann, “Kardinal Franjo Šeper, predsjednik Međunarodne teološke komisije”, in: *Veritatem facientes in caritate: zbornik radova Međunarodnoga simpozija o kardinalu Franji Šeperu povodom 20. obljetnice smrti* (Zagreb: Glas koncila/Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2003), pp. 384-391.

⁸⁸ Jure Krišto, *Katolička crkva u totalitarizmu: 1945-1990*, (Zagreb: Globus, 1997), p. 51.

Vienna archbishop, Cardinal Franz König,⁸⁹ he was appointed to the ranks of the Roman cardinals on 22 February 1965. On this occasion Šeper was also received in the honorary ranks of the Roman Church of Sts. Peter and Paul in the Roman district Eur a Via Ostiensi.⁹⁰ This event, however, was initially only tersely covered in the Yugoslav press, and Šeper only received greater attention subsequently, quite obviously after instructions were received from the Party leadership.⁹¹ As a cardinal, Šeper became the primary personality in the Croatian Church. In this regard, he led many liturgical celebrations, such as, for example, those in Sinj, Šibenik, Đakovo, Tekije, Pula and Trsat. He also led the national pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1967, and the pilgrimages to Rome, Lourdes and Fatima. Šeper's pastoral work included major visits abroad – to the United States, Canada, Germany and Austria.

Toward the end of his service as Zagreb archbishop, Šeper issued a decree on the initiation of the Clerical and Pastoral Council. At Šeper's proposal, Pope Paul VI appointed Franjo Kuharić to the post of Zagreb auxiliary bishop on 3 May 1964. Later, after Šeper's departure to Rome, Kuharić would assume the post of Zagreb archbishop on 16 June 1970.

Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

The crown of Šeper's career was his appointment to the post of prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith⁹² on 8 January 1968⁹³ by decision of Pope Paul VI. This was the highest office ever held by a representative

⁸⁹ Franz König was born in Rabenstein, in Lower Austria, on 3 August 1905. He was ordained on in the Diocese of Sankt Pölten on 29 October 1933, and he was appointed its auxiliary bishop on 3 July 1952. He was made titular bishop of Livias in Palestine on the same day. On 10 May 1956 he was appointed archbishop of Vienna, and he assumed administration of the archdiocese on 13 June of the same year. He was elevated to the rank of cardinal on 15 December 1958, and on this occasion he was also conferred the title of bishop of the Basilica of St. Eusebius in Rome. On the following day, on 21 February, he also assumed the post of military vicar in Austria, which he held until 7 May 1969. From 6 April 1965 until 27 June 1980 he served as the head of the Holy See's Secretariat of Non-believers. He participated in all sessions of the Second Vatican Council. He also participated in the conclaves held in 1963 and in August and October of 1978. In 1985 he retired, and he died in Vienna on 13 March 2004 (source: <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bkonig.html>).

⁹⁰ NAZ, OFŠ, *Osobne isprave*, binding no. 6, S. Razum, "Franjo Šeper: prilozi za životopis ili izabrane isprave o duhovnosti, službama i častima", p. 388, *Glas koncila*, 28 Feb. 1965, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 22-23 Feb. 1965, M. Akmadža, *Franjo Šeper – mudročcu protiv jednogum-lja*, p. 207, J. Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", p. 506.

⁹¹ *Vjesnik*, 26 (1965), 6471, 23 Feb. 1965.

⁹² http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/index_it.htm.

⁹³ NAZ, OFŠ, Charter, folder no. 9, S. Razum, "Franjo Šeper: prilozi za životopis ili izabrane isprave o duhovnosti, službama i častima", pp. 401-402, *Glas koncila*, 14 January 1968, *Službeni vjesnik Nadbiskupije Zagrebačke*, 1/1968, no. 1, pp. 1-3, 2/1968, no. 2, p. 1.

of the Croatian Catholic Church, for this is the central Congregation within the Church. This is – unofficially – the third-ranking post in the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, after the pope and secretary of state. Upon his departure for Rome, the vacant seat of the Zagreb Archdiocese was assumed by Franjo Kuharić, at the time the auxiliary bishop.⁹⁴ As the head of this Congregation, Šeper largely implemented its reorganization, adapting it to the needs of the Catholic Church in the modern day, by distinguishing three fields: doctrinaire, clerical and marital.⁹⁵ Besides this post, Šeper also assumed duties in several Roman dicasteries, such as the Office of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, the Congregation for Bishops, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, and the Congregation for Catholic Education. Šeper also assumed the chair of the International Theological Commission and served as a member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission in charge of auditing canonical law codices. Šeper performed the duties of prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith until 25 November 1981, when, at he personal request, he was retired by Pope John Paul II. He died in Rome not long afterward, on 30 November 1981.⁹⁶

Conclusion

The positions of Archbishop Franjo Šeper did not differ from those of his predecessor, Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac. Only their tactics differed, but they worked toward the same end: to improve the status of the Catholic Church in society. Because of his moderate and reasonable approach, Šeper was appointed archbishop of Zagreb, and then cardinal and finally prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. His selection was not coincidental, for upon his appointment to individual posts, the Holy See was seeking an individual who would perform his duties at a given time in the best possible manner to further the general welfare of the Catholic Church. For as a rule, the Church very closely monitored the work of each of its dignitaries, and this included Franjo Šeper. This is why he was in fact appointed to such high offices in the Catholic Church, and here nothing was left to chance. Besides his qualities, factors crucial to his appointment to the post of prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith were international affairs and the desire of the Church to pull down the Iron Curtain, which isolated a large portion of Europe from the rest of the world. When the Holy See's moves and the course and outcomes of its negotiations with the governments of East European countries are analyzed, one may see that there was a great deal of logic in appointing Šeper prefect,

⁹⁴ *Službeni vjesnik Nadbiskupije Zagrebačke*, 8/1969, no. 8, pp. 99-102.

⁹⁵ Joseph Ratzinger, "Kardinal Franjo Šeper, prefekt Kongregacije za nauk vjere", in: *Veritatem facientes in caritate: zbornik radova Međunarodnoga simpozija o kardinalu Franji Šeperu povodom 20. obljetnice smrti* (Zagreb: Glas koncila/Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2003), pp. 52-65.

⁹⁶ J. Kolarić, "Franjo Šeper 1960-69", p. 506.

and then, ten years later, making Kraków Archbishop Karol Wojtyła the new pope. These moves, and many others, in large measure influenced the events that ultimately led to the fall of the ideological bloc division and the fall of the communist social order in Eastern Europe. In this sense, the view that Šeper was removed from Zagreb are not entirely founded, primarily because Šeper played a very notable role in the sessions of the Second Vatican Council and in the work of many of the Holy See's commissions and other bodies. The view that Šeper was purposely removed from Zagreb is proven groundless by the fact that he was appointed to a very high and important duty, which would have been unthinkable in case of a person who is simply being removed from some previous post. Šeper's significance and value is reflected in the fact that despite his very high offices, he never left behind him any scandals, controversies or disputes, which clearly demonstrates his character. He was esteemed, or at the very least well-regarded and respected, even by those who may not have agreed with him. His prudence was reflected in the fact that he very adroitly avoided conflict at a time when this was by no means simple. His deference and loyalty were also apparent, as when he accepted the papal decision to sign the Protocol between the Holy See and Yugoslavia, even though he personally felt anxiety and apprehension that the faithful in Croatia and Yugoslavia as whole would not derive any benefit from it. This clearly indicates that he respected authority, a quality vital to the operation of a large and expansive organization like the Catholic Church. Finally, it may be stated that Croatian Catholic believers, as well as non-believers, may be proud of Franjo Šeper.



Photograph: Cardinal Franjo Šeper, Zagreb archbishop and then prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Romae
In Aedibus Apostolicis Vaticanis
ante diem VIII Calendas Martias
anno Domini MCMLXV

PAULUS VI PONT. MAX.

creavit ac renuntiavit
S.R.E. Presbyterum Cardinalem

FRANCISCUM SEPER

ipsumque in Purpuratorum Patrum Collegium
cooptavit, delatis eidem honoribus, favoribus,
facultatibus, priorum partium iuribus, immu-
nitatibus, praerogativis, privilegiis, veniis et
oneribus, quae defuncti Patribus Cardinalibus
translaticio more solent, additisque necessariis,
exceptionibus et opportunis.

Jacobus Aloisius Carl. Copello
S. R. E. Cancellarius

Franciscus Trivello
Apostolicum Cancellarium Regens

Franjo Šeper – eine außergewöhnliche Persönlichkeit der Katholischen Kirche in Kroatien und in der Welt

Zusammenfassung

Diese Arbeit zeigt bekannte und weniger bekannte Angaben und Geschehnisse aus dem Leben von Franjo Šeper, anlässlich des dreißigsten Jahrestages seines Todes. Er wurde 1905 in Osijek geboren, Schule besuchte er in Zagreb, studierte in Zagreb und Rom, wo er den Doktorgrad in Theologie und Philosophie erwarb. Zum Priester wurde er 1935 geweiht und von 1935 bis 1941 war er erzbischöflicher Sekretär des Zagreber Erzbistums. Danach war er als Rektor des Priesterseminars in Zagreb bis zum 1951 tätig, als er Pfarramt in der Pfarrei Christkönig in Zagreber Siedlung Trnje übernahm, wo er drei Jahre blieb. Im Jahre 1954 wurde er zum Weihbischof der Zagreber Erzdiözese, vier Jahre später zum Bischof-Koadjutor ernannt. Zum Zagreber Erzbischof wurde er 1960 geweiht und blieb in diesem Amt bis 1969. Von 1969 bis zu seiner Rentierung 1981 hatte er das Amt des Kardinalpräfektes der Kongregation für die Glaubenslehre inne. Im Jahre 1965 wurde er wegen seiner Verdienste vom Papst Paulus VI. zum Mitglied der Kardinalskongregation der Katholischen Kirche ernannt. Eine sehr bemerkenswerte Rolle spielte er bei den Tagungen des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils von 1962 bis 1965, machte bedeutende Dienste in zahlreichen Kommissionen der Katholischen Kirche und erwarb sich mehrmals große Verdienste um die Priester und Laien der Zagreber Erzdiözese, der Kirche in Kroatien, aber auch jene der Welt. Er starb in Rom im Jahre 1981.

